

MICHAEL FERREIRA AGE 19 STOKE NEWINGTON AREA DECEMBER '78

Michael Ferreira was stabbed in Stoke Newington High Street in December. His friends helped him into Stoke Newington Police Station in an effort to get immediate help. Tragically it seemed that the police were more interested in questioning him instead of getting him to hospital immediately, although they said later that they had called an ambulance straightaway. His friends saw that he was rapidly weakening but could not get the police to accept that the most urgent action was needed. When the ambulance eventually came it was too late. He died in the ambulance on the way to hospital.

There was immense anger in the Black community at what was widely seen as police neglect of a young man dying of stab wounds. Two white youths were charged, one with murder and the other with manslaughter but the charge of murder was later reduced to manslaughter. They were convicted but received comparatively light sentences.

Hackney Council for Racial Equality

MALE AGE: TWENTIES

DALSTON AREA

APRIL '79

The complainant was stopped by two policemen from a panda car, one told him 'excuse me I am looking for someone who fits your description'. He was asked his name which he gave. He was then told by the policeman 'you people tell a lot of lies, have you anything to prove who you are?' He showed them his London Transport bus ticket and photocard. He was then asked how he had got that and he said that he had bought it as they were on sale. He was then asked where he worked and he replied he was a student. They then asked for his passport but he said it was with the Home Office. They then asked for a Home Office receipt, he said he had a letter at home.

He was told he would have to get into the car and go to his home with them. He said he wanted to buy a comb from the market so they drove him there. When he was there he was allowed to go into 'Dyke and Dryden' and asked Mr Dryden if he could use his telephone to make an emergency phone call. Mr Dryden overheard the conversation, offered to help and went back with him to the police. Meanwhile the two police were holding a black youngster who they allowed to go when Mr Dryden approached. Mr Dryden identified himself to them and they then said they would not take him home but would phone instead. But Mr Dryden said 'lets settle the matter now, are you immigration officers?' They told Mr Dryden that he could not tell them what to do but then drove off.

The complainant did not take the matter any further.

Hackney Council for Racial Equality

MALE AGE: 50s

HOMERTON AREA

MARCH '80

The complainant was walking along a road in heavy rain when a car with three men in it drove past very quickly, drenching him with water from a large puddle. The car pulled up a little further along the road and three men in plain clothes got out and came back to him and asked him where he was going. He said 'to the shops'. He was seized, pushed up against some railings and roughly searched. He asked what was going on and received the reply 'you must fucking shut up, we are taking you, you are going to get it'. He asked 'what am I going to get? What have I done wrong?' The man replied 'you know what'.

He had the presence of mind to ask the men to identify themselves for which he received the rebuke 'you fucking shut up'. He then noticed there was some form of walkie-talkie set on the front seat and said 'I suppose you are police'. His pockets were searched and he was asked to give his name and address which he did. He added 'I have done nothing, I am not a criminal.' The same man then removed his woollen hat. When he protested 'I have just washed my hair with hot water' the man responded 'I wash my hair everyday, you stink, I do not like you people.' The complainant is black.

Hackney Council for Racial Equality

5

NEWTON ROSE CLAPTON AREA MAY '81

The case of Newton Rose received a very great deal of public attention. He was charged with the murder of a white youth after being taken to Stoke Newington Police Station.

There was a strong public campaign in support of him and he was freed after his case went to the Court of Appeal. The attitude and actions of the police aroused great anger in the black community. It was widely considered that he had been framed by the police as there were no eye witnesses and no forensic evidence to support the police case and the police had not sufficiently questioned the dead youth's friends.

Hackney Council for Racial Equality

MALE AGE:50s CLAPTON AREA SEPTEMBER '81

The man was called by the police to Hackney Police Station after his son had been arrested and asked to bring food and cigarettes. He saw two plain clothes police behind the counter. The man asked for the officer in charge of his son's case. One of the plain clothes men indicated that his son must be the one that he assumed had committed a theft. The father protested at this. Whereupon one of the plain clothes men came round the desk, grabbed him by the neck and held him down and banged his head on the ground. The second one came round and together they threw him down the steps of the Police Station into the rain. He shouted for help but no-one helped him. Then a sergeant came out and asked if he had brought the food as he still lay there in the rain. The man had £45 in his jacket when first thrown out but later he found £15 missing. He took a taxi home. Later he went to hospital and had his injuries seen to.

He is suing the police for damages.

Hackney Council for Racial Equality

The appalling case of Mrs Knight and daughter Jennifer received a great deal of public attention because of the extreme nature of what happened. The police were called to a neighbours dispute by the Knights. They ended up being arrested by the police and severely beaten up and racially abused at Stoke Newington Police Station. In fact the beating was so bad that Mrs Knight had to have hospital attention and her arm put in a sling. The Knights were then charged with a range of serious offences including greivous bodily harm and assault on policemen. Following a sustained public campaign and two Crown Court trials she and her daughter were acquitted of most of the charges at the first trial and the remaining charges were dropped after the second trial when the jury could not agree on a verdict.

This case generated enormous depth of feeling in the community and it contributed a great deal to the community's angry view of the police in the Stoke Newington area.

Hackney Council for Racial Equality

These two elderly black people were awarded £50,000 damages for a savage and inhuman attack on them. It was condemned as a 'catalogue of violence and inhuman treatment by young officers' by the Judge, Justice Mars-Jones. He also condemned the subsequent police cover up as 'monstrous, wicked and shameful conduct'. Yet despite the obvious guilt of the officers concerned none of those involved in the assault have been disciplined. The assault took place when 17 officers turned up at the Whites' house on the pretext of looking for stolen goods. Although a search warrant had apparently been issued nothing was found and the search warrant was never even produced. Once inside the house the police officers seized upon the Whites' son Dennis, and started beating him with a truncheon. When the parents came down to investigate they were set upon by the police too. To cover this gross miscarriage of justice the Whites were dragged barefoot to a police car with their unconscious son and taken to Stoke Newington Police Station where they were charged with 11 offences, including assault. Most were so flimsy that they were dismissed but remarkably their son was convicted of trying to wound a policeman and damaging his tunic. His parents are still trying to get this conviction quashed.

During the investigation into their son's case on one occasion the police turned up at their house in the middle of the night. Mrs White was so frightened that she could not open the door; the police officer jammed the door-bell with a twig so that it would not stop ringing.

This case illustrates only too clearly why so many black people fear the police.

Hackney Council for Racial Equality

DAVID AND LUCILLE WHITE

Aggravated and exemplary damages of more than £50,000 were awarded to Mr and Mrs White, a black couple in their fifties living in Stoke Newington, after they had been brutally beaten up by the police at their home.

The judge, Justice Mars-Jones said that the couple had been subjected to 'monstrous, wicked and shameful conduct in the name of justice' and that the police had persisted in a five year cover up of their brutal, savage and sustained variety of assaults. (Times 24.4.82)

The judge said that the Whites had been prosecuted maliciously by the police for offences that the police knew they had not committed in order to escape the consequences of their own wrongful acts. He went on to say that such shameful behaviour called for punishment.

The police officers who beat up Mr and Mrs White and persisted in lying about the facts to cover up their vicious brutality are still serving in the police force. The DPP has refused to bring any charges against them.

This young man was found lying in a house in Dalston in very strange circumstances one Sunday morning. It was reported that he was found lying in glass from a kitchen window and a glass partition door by the police. They thought he was just dazed and carried him out without examining him properly. When they looked more closely they found he had a stomach wound.

They felt the pulse and pronounced him dead. No burglary implements were found near him and it was established that he had visited various friends during the previous night and had been in a very anxious frame of mind.

The jury returned a verdict of 'accidental death'. His friends and relatives rose and left the court in a gesture of dissatisfaction and his mother said she was definitely not satisfied.

Hackney Council for Racial Equality

MALE

STOKE NEWINGTON AREA

JANUARY '83

Black footballer Laurie Cunningham, interviewed in a Newspaper in January, claimed that an investigation into the murder of three of his relatives in Hackney was mishandled because of racist motives on behalf of the police.

Norma Richards, Cunningham's sister-in-law, and her two daughters aged nine and seven were found brutally murdered in their home on Kingsland Estate, Dalston in summer '82. A National Front slogan was painted on the wall in nail varnish and a message was scratched on the bedroom wall saying 'This is what we're going to do with all niggers'.

The police removed the area of wallpaper on which the slogan was written and claimed at the time that it was a red herring. Cunningham said in his interview with Diario 16 that they had asked him not to talk about this.

Detective Chief Superintendent Charles Robertson who was in charge of the inquiry in Dalston said that they had done everything possible to catch the murderer. He said that they believed it was someone close to the family.

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FERNANDES CASE

John Fernandes was a lecturer at the Police Cadet Training school in Hendon. He was so disturbed by the racist remarks expressed in essays by police cadets - such as 'Do blacks burn better with petrol or oil?' and 'blacks in Britain are a pest'; that he released some of them to the press.

Even Commander Wells, in charge of the training school, agreed that the 62 essays showed an alarming degree of racial prejudice. After considerable press coverage the only result was that Fernandes was sacked...